

Meeting Highlights

EPMO SDLC Workgroup

DAY: Wednesday, July 13, 2011

TIME: 9:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.

LOCATION: Department of Insurance

(Dobbs Building, 430 N Salisbury Street, Raleigh, Conference Room 2238)

Meeting Called By:	SDLC Workgroup Members
Meeting Purpose:	Discussion with Jose Solera, Review Action Items
Attendees:	<p>Present: Beau Garcia, Department of Insurance Chris Cline, NC Community College System Gaye Mays, Statewide Enterprise Project Management Office Cheryl Ritter, Department of Transportation Subha Sridharan, Department of Health & Human Services Carolyn Broadney, Department of Transportation</p> <p>Not in attendance: Ann Tyndall, Department of Public Instruction Ronda Jones, Department of Public Instruction Michele Jackson, Department of Revenue Arun Kumar, Department of Health & Human Services</p>
Guests:	Vicky Kumar, OSC Kathy Bromeard, Statewide Enterprise Project Management Office Jose Solera, Railinc

Jose Solera discussion

Team: The team has made updates to the Workflow but talk to us about governance and business ownership.

Jose: Agile processes adjust at anytime but the team has to make decisions. Agile allows a review at each iteration or sprint. Deliverables should be completed at the end of an iteration and feedback should occur at the end of an iteration. Agile should have smaller, independent pieces of work.

Team: How should the amount of work be sized?

Jose: User stories are an important feature in Agile. These user stories get sized. Before choosing a scale for the team, it's important to be comfortable with what story points are. Story points are simply an abstract unit of size (or complexity) assigned to each story on your backlog. They're not hours, days, weeks, or any other scale that has an absolute

measurement. They're simply "points". It may be 0, ½, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 10, etc. Use anything that has sizes associated, such as t-shirts, dogs, etc. It is only a guidance that is relative to each.

Team: How do you get the customer accustomed to Agile?

Jose: Education and training. The stakeholder has to have buy-in as well.

Team: How do you know when you are done (with a sprint or iteration)?

Jose: The business determines when you are done. They determine if something should be moved to another sprint or if something should not be done at all based on cost. Additionally, acceptance criteria should be collected prior to coding beginning. QA is always part of the process of approval.

Team: How does your company deal with project governance and starting projects?

Jose: We review all new ideas for the upcoming year; this is perhaps ½ to 2/3 of the work for the year. This is usually completed in April timeframe with projects starting in December timeframe. It takes about a year to determine which projects will be started. Some stakeholders want this to process to be looked at on a quarterly basis because short projects shouldn't have to wait a year to get started. Additionally, the PM provides monthly updates on projects.

Team: Looking at the bottom of the "Agile Extended Scrum PM Cycle" chart, how are "architecture" or "User eXperience" addressed?

Jose: These are all part of the User Stories. There are user stories around Architecture, User eXperiences, and Documentation. There are usually multiple stories on each of these.

Team: Are there projects that are too big for Agile?

Jose: Any IT or knowledge project is a great Agile project. Work can be completed in an Agile process, even if the product is not put into production immediately. Iterations of the project can be completed with an Agile process.

Team: Tell us about how staff get trained on Agile processes.

Jose: His company brought in trainers for the project managers. They conduct lots of training; they have a Training and Coaching plan. (They also use Rally to assist them.) During training, a coach actually dealt with behaviors. The team understands that they own the product and are held responsible for the final product.

Jose: Another part of training is for PMs to understand that Agile needs a "sustainable" pace. Don't burn the team out. 32 hours a week is a good pace to work, with the other time being spent on administrative tasks.

Team: How can an organization move to Agile?

Jose: Education and training; have Agile sessions explaining the processes. You also need strong stakeholders.

Team: Why is Agile better than Waterfall?

Jose: Schedule. Agile provides the business working code faster than does Waterfall. While it is a cultural change, the business has more input into the final product. "Agile is better, faster, and cheaper."

Team: From an EPMO perspective, what are your thoughts on assessment?

Jose: You have to have process. Most processes are biased towards Waterfall so you have to adjust those processes. Business ownership and prioritization are very important. Ownership and accountability are key to Agile. Raleigh has the 3rd largest Agile group and they have lots of resources there to assist with Agile.

Team: How do you handle a customer who thinks they have an Agile process but it's not; i.e., they have no sprints or backlogs.

Jose: You have to start with "What is Agile". Even look at the definition in Wikipedia to help people understand Agile.

Team: How do you define "documentation"?

Jose: Documentation is defined as value to the team. It doesn't always have to be formal. If appropriate, take a photo of a drawing on the white board to have documentation. Required documentation should be a part of the user story.

Team: What are your thoughts on our Project Workflow?

Jose: The current PPM proposed workflow is not good for Agile. Planning goes with Execution and Build. The gate would be Planning and Implementation.

Team: This would be a great item to discuss at the next meeting. Perhaps the gate should be renamed to Envision gate.

Team: What happens if the customer does not have time to test?

Jose: Stop the project or iteration. Testing must be completed so the requirement can be approved.

After the break, Beau explained our current workflow and artifacts.

Team: Do you have governance?

Jose: Governance occurs for the industry projects. There is a weekly status update and the committee can stop a project anytime.

Team: Because of the items such as the TASD, should we just not think about using Agile?

Jose: No. Just learn how to work around the TASD.

Team: What are the artifacts of Agile PM?

Jose: Take a look at the items at the "Agile Extended Scrum PM Cycle." This is a good basis from which to work.

Team: Concerning health of a project, do you have Agile metrics?

Jose: We look at budget and schedule primarily. Functionality is determined by the business.

Team: Can you ever be red or yellow on the budget?

Jose: Yes. For example, if a license is needed and the cost was not expected.

Team: Can you ever be red or yellow on schedule?

Jose: Yes. You can always move items to the next iteration but you have to ask why the schedule was not met. This is more subjective than having a metric.

Team: Do you use MS Project?

Jose: Rally works better for us.

New Action Items:

- Take another look at the PPM Workflow. Since, Planning goes with Execution and Build, the gate would be Planning and Implementation. Should the gate be renamed to Envision gate?